

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of preparing a titania composite membrane for separating water/alcohol mixtures, the method comprising the steps of:
 - 5 (a) modifying macropores of a porous support by sequentially treating the macropores with silica xerogel and γ -alumina sol in this order;
 - (b) forming a titania surface layer according to a sol-gel process by coating said modified porous surface with titania sol; and
 - 10 (c) drying said membrane at 20-30 °C and relative humidity of 50-70% followed by calcining said membrane at 250-400 °C.
- 15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said porous support is a porous metal support having a pore size of 1-5 μm .
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (a) comprises a first modification of the macropores of said porous support by packing silica xerogel with a press and a second modification of the surface with γ -alumina sol according to a soaking-rolling process.
- 20 4. The method of claim 1, wherein said titania sol is prepared by refluxing titanium tetraalkoxide in a mixture of water, alcohol and hydrochloric acid.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the step (b) is performed by coating the modified surface with titania sol according to a soaking-rolling process.
- 25 6. The titania composite membrane for separating water/alcohol mixtures prepared

according to any of claims 1-5, wherein said membrane has a pore size of 1-2 nm, a surface area of 300-350 m²/g, a permeability for water of 25-520 g/m²· h and a selectivity for water of 1-400 in water/alcohol mixtures at 250 °C.

5 7. The membrane of claim 6, wherein said permeability for water is 25-420g/m²· h and said selectivity for water is 10-140 in water/ethanol mixtures at 250 °C.

8. The membrane of claim 6, wherein said permeability for water is 50-520g/m²· h and said selectivity for water of 30-400 in water/propanol mixtures at 250 °C.